

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0288

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0282

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,MOPS,SOPN,AO,ID

SUBJ: BRITISH JOURNALIST DAVID MARTIN'S COVERAGE OF ANGOLA WAR

REF: (A)LONDON 02099; (B) PORT OF SPAIN0036

AMERICAN EMBOFF HERE WHO KNEW MARTIN IN LUANDA DURING THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO DE FACTO COLLAPSE OF THE QUADRIpartite TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT RELATES THAT MARTIN'S PERSONAL PRO-MPLA SYMPATHIES WERE VISIBLE AT THAT TIME. OTHER CORRESPONDENTS GENERALLY REGARDED MARTIN AS "MPLA'S MAN" AND ENVIED HIS QUICK AND EASY ACCESS TO ITS LEADERSHIP. MARTIN APPARENTLY HAS A LONG-STANDING ASSOCIATION WITH OLDER MPLA LEADERS AND HAD WRITTEN LAUDATORY - AND INACCURATE - ACCOUNTS OF MPLA MILITARY "SUCCESSES" AGAINST PORTUGUESE IN DAYS BEFORE THE 1974 PORTUGUESE COUP. (HIS PUBLISHED MATERIAL INCLUDES AT LEAST ONE BOOK.) ACCORDING TO EMBOFF, DURING FORMAL CONTACTS WITH U.S.PERSONNEL, MARTIN OFTEN CONCEALED HIS PERSONAL SYMPATHIES, HOWEVER IN MORE CONVIVIAL SITUATIONS HE LET THEM SHOW. FINALLY, EMBOFF REPORTS MARTIN -- WHOSE BEHAVIOR HE SAYS WAS SOMEWHAT DISSOLUTE EVEN BY THEN PREVAILING LOCAL STANDARDS -- DID NOT IMPRESS ANYONE IN LUANDA AS ANYTHING EVEN APPROACHING "INCORRUPTABLE" NOR AS A JOURNALIST

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PROFESSIONALLY DEDICATED TO IMPARTIALITY AND OBJECTIVITY.

NO ONE ACQUAINTED WITH MARTIN PERSONALLY WOULD BE
PARTICULARLY SURPRISED IF HIS NATURAL PRO-MPLA BIAS
HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY CASH PAYMENTS OR OTHER FAVORS.
BRITTON

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